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ABSTRACT

Data on characteristics and accomplishments of the Highline Public Schools' Excellence in Education Grant Program at Gregory Heights Elementary School are reported. The program, which involves second through sixth grade students, was implemented to increase academic learning time, mathematics and reading scores, and total volunteer time. Factors that increased and decreased academic learning time are identified; program successes are delineated; and positive outcomes concerning the evaluation of student achievement are noted. In all academic areas except fifth grade mathematics, students exceeded the goal of 1.2 months growth for every month spent in reading and mathematics. Volunteer time devoted to directing or assisting in student learning activities increased. Plans for the extension of the program in the future focus on improving student self-esteem and discipline. (RH)

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Final Report

Highline Public Schools

Excellence in Education Grant

Grant #ERT-G-86-0040, Project #6-2905

Office of the Assistant Secretary for
Educational Research & Improvement
U. S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

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Section I: Project Demographics

A description of the staff population:

The Gregory Heights staff is composed of 6 males and 29 females, all of Caucasian origin. Most of the staff (19) are in the 40-50 years of age category. See the chart below for specific information.

				Age			
	M	F	Ethnic	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60
Administration		1					
Teachers/Counselor	4	17		3	2	15	1
Clerical		4				3	1
Teacher Aide		6			4	1	1
Custodial	2	1			2		

Student Demographics:

A description of the student population at Gregory Heights follows. As of October 1, 1986, Gregory Heights Elementary had a total student enrollment of 562 making it the largest elementary school in the District. The student population, grades K-6, is composed of 267 females (47.5%) and 295 males (52.5%) with the following ethnic distribution:

Black	18 students	(3.2%)
Asian	25 students	(4.5%)
American Indian	15 students	(2.7%)
Hispanic	16 students	(2.8%)
Caucasian	488 students	(86.8%)

Gregory Heights Elementary has 19.77% of its students (111 total) receiving free or reduced lunch which is slightly lower than the District-wide poverty index.

Section II: Activities and Objectives

The description of the treatment activities will be detailed under each objective.

Objective 1: Increase Academic Learning Time by 20 minutes per day per classroom during the project period.

- Academic Learning Time

  - Two staff received training in the state-sponsored Academic Efficiency Program in the spring of 1986.

  - Staff orientations were held in May and September.

  - Building-wide observation for academic efficiency during reading and math was conducted 9/23/86 and was reported back to staff on 10/8/86.

  - Individual self-assessments of student success rates and engagement rates have been conducted during October and November.

  - Specific plans for increasing the academic learning time available have been formulated and implemented to varying degrees.
    . Pull-out schedules have been revised to minimize interruptions to academic instruction time.
    . Assemblies are now always scheduled next to a recess period to avoid duplicating transition time.

  - Principal observations always include a focus on academic learning time: recognition of effective, efficient strategies, as well as suggested refinements.

  - Major stress factors were identified in the spring of 1986. Appropriate changes made:
    . Repair broken equipment (window blinds, projectors)
    . Tighter scheduling of PE and Music itinerant teachers
    . Communication with parents about absenteeism and doctor appointments

  - Lunchroom procedure more efficiently planned.

  - Teaching students expected behaviors for Walk to Reading, transitions (assemblies, play, lunchroom). Practice and reward of appropriate behaviors, resulting in minimal discipline problems.

  - Increase classroom learning time through the use of volunteers (Objective 3).

- Additional efficiency measures include:
  Individual classroom efficiency strategies have been shared and adapted, such as roll-taking by students before class starts. This sharing has occured in two ways: (1) at staff/grade level meetings, (2) through numerous peer observation sessions.

- Peer observation will occur in February and March for teachers to continue to learn time-saving strategies from each other.

Objective 2: The mean gain of students in grades 2-6 at Gregory Heights School in mathematics and reading will be 6 months growth during a 5-month instructional period (or 1.2 months growth for each month of instruction).

- Students in grades 2-6 were administered the California Achievement Test in September, 1986.

- Test scores shared with parents in November conference.

- Results of the testing were sent to each teacher.

- A test score analysis workshop was conducted on 12/3/86 to interpret and identify strengths, weaknesses, and formulate a plan of action for the weak area. This workshop is now serving as a district model and is being replicated in other schools and at other levels.

- Changes planned at the December workshop are underway
  . Synonym/Antonym vocabulary development
  . Use of sponge activities
  . Curriculum analysis has been done in the Intermediate Reading to address identified deficiencies

- 1/21/87 - All staff participated in a half-day session (intermediate in the morning, primary in the afternoon) to follow up on and extend the December 3, 1986 test score analysis workshop.

  Included were:
  . a review of strengths and focus areas
  . in-depth analysis of the testing instruments, including skill analysis and formatting of questions
  . the beginning of existing curriculum analysis and correlation. Teachers pulled out specific materials to support the focus areas, and made plans to develop additional materials to support their identified skill areas.

- February - A team of nine teachers and parents attended an IBM Write to Read program workshop, looking for educational software to support Gregory Heights' academic goals.

- February/March - One-half day grade-level planning sessions were held, focusing upon specific academic objectives, as determined by the previous workshops addressing student achievement. Curriculum coordinators in math and reading were included in these sessions as resource personnel.

- February/March - Six staff members made visits to programs outside the school and district, including a Primary (grades K-3) Center, Kindergarten program, and a regular K-6 elementary school. The purpose of these visits was to look closely at other academic programs for ideas to support Gregory Heights' academic goals.

- Project A.S.S.I.S.T. (Affective Skills Sequentially Introduced and Systematically Taught) materials have been adapted for use at all grade levels, and are now in use.

Objective 3 - The total volunteer time devoted to directing/assisting in student academic learning activities (as opposed to clerical, routine activities) at Gregory Heights school will increase at least 30% over that of the previous year.

- A staff survey on use of volunteers and volunteer time was conducted in September, 1986.

- During the fall of 1986, extensive research has been conducted to find out about effective volunteer programs.

- A staff awareness and concerns workshop was held December 10, 1986.

- A definition/goals (survey of options of the role of the volunteers) workshop has been held on December 17, 1986.

- a letter inviting volunteers to attend an orientation meeting was sent out in January, 1987.

- The Volunteer Orientation meeting conducted by Jan Tietz was held January 23, 1987 with 13 in attendance. Applications were filled out and turned in.

- February, 1987 - Jan Wright, Effective Schools Facilitator, led staff meeting and presented booklet for teacher preparation. Met with part of staff to assign volunteers who applied. These teachers were to contact and train them. Jan Tietz met with rest of staff individually.

- Volunteers have been assigned to assist classes during reading and math time. Teachers have informally reported very positive results, and many are indicating an interest in more volunteer help.

Spring 1987 Activities:

1. 4/15/87 - 2 hour staff workshop conducted by Jo Ellen McGrath, Grant Facilitator, focusing on two areas:

   A. Staff survey regarding actual amount of time used for non-instructional building activities. This survey has been adapted from the Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory's Academic Efficiency A+ program (see attachment #1) and was previously administered in the fall. Results will be included in the June 30th report.

   B. Preparation of staff to spend one-half day release time organizing lessons and materials to help prepare students for test-taking. Both concept skills and test taking skills are to be addressed, as well as general building-wide testing procedure, and (see attachment #2) tips for parents.

      This portion of the workshop will include setting of criteria, analysis of skills needed, and will lead to one-half day per grade level for staff to prepare lessons to teach test-taking skills and review concepts. This will be followed by a minimum of 1-1/2 weeks of teaching and reviewing these skill areas, prior to the Spring testing session.

2. Staff attendance at four Bureau of Educational Research workshops:

   A. 100 Ways to Make Reading Instruction More Effective
   B. Increasing Achievement of Your Remedial Reading Students
   C. Improving Student Achievement and Behavior Through Building Self-Esteem
   D. Discipline: Kids Are Worth It

3. 5/4 - 5/8 - Building-wide post-testing will be conducted, using the California Achievement Tests, Reading and Math sections only.

4. 5/14 - Voluntary observations will be conducted for those interested in an assessment of student engaged rates in reading and math. The diagnostic instrument to be used will be the Mid-Continent Regional Educational Lab, Form A. (see attachment #3)

5. 5/15 - one-half day staff workshop on curriculum organization conducted by Linda Simington, principal in Portland Public Schools, Portland, Oregon.

6. 6/3 - Formal, building-wide observations of student engagement will be held for every class in reading and math. (Instrument will be the M.C.R.E.L. Form A)

7. 5/20 - A 2-1/2 hour evaluation workshop will be conducted by Jo Ellen McGrath, Grant Facilitator. The purpose of this workshop is to evaluate all grant activities to date and begin preliminary planning for next year.

Section III: Anticipated Outcomes

Anticipated Outcomes:

Objective 1 - ALT increased 20 minutes/day

It is anticipated that there will be many factors that will contribute to the reduction of non-instructional activities during school time, and therefore increase the academic learning time.

1. Reduction of interruptions from the office.

2. Parents have been informed about students missing school for doctor appointments, etc.

3. Staff members have shared efficiency strategies periodically at staff meetings, and through their peer observations.

4. Equipment has been repaired (non-working projectors, screens, shades).

5. Expectations for student behavior are clear, and consequences are consistently applied. Therefore, major discipline disruptions have been reduced. The total number of inappropriate behavior incidences reported to the principal during 1985-86 was 112. As of April 30, the number of inappropriate behavior incidences reported to the principal has been only 47, a dramatic decrease.

6. The pull-out schedules for At-Risk and Special Education students have been revised to protect the reading and math time. Reading and math are taught during the same blocks of time for each grade level, allowing special education and at-risk students to receive their reading and math instruction at this time. For example, students are no longer pulled out of reading for math, but work with the special education teacher or the regular education teacher as they are able during the normally scheduled reading or math time.

In addition to the factors that are reducing non-academic learning time, there are several factors that are contributing to increasing academic learning time:

1. Positive student self-esteem and climate are a continuing thrust, through the use of the ASSIST materials. A student who is experiencing a successful, positive learning activity is far more likely to maintain a greater degree of on-task behavior. (Wattenburg and Clifford, 1962)

2. The increased use of volunteers has provided additional student opportunity for practice and fluency when learning/ refining new skills.

Objective 2 - Student achievement will be 1.2 months growth for each month in school.

1. Post standardized testing will be conducted the week of May 4-8, 1987, with the results of this testing available for review by mid-June.

2. It is anticipated that the students in grades 2-6 will easily meet or exceed the goal of 1.2 months growth for each month of instruction.

3. A very positive outcome has been the development of models to use for the analysis of test scores, standardized tests, curriculum, and teaching students test taking skills. (See attachments #4-#12). These models have been/are being utilized and adapted very successfully at other buildings in the Highline District demonstrating the replicability of this part of the project.

4. A second positive outcome is the support from staff in their willingness to participate in release time activities to plan and develop appropriate classroom learning experiences to better prepare students for the standardized testing experience.

Objective 3 - Increase volunteer time with student learning activities at least 30%.

At this time, there has been a 235% increase in the use of volunteer time devoted to directing/assisting in student learning activities (see chart below). As reported by teacher survey, volunteers are spending an average of 260 minutes per day working with children in reading, math, and other academic activities. This is an average of 13 minutes per class per day.

	1985-86	1986-87
# volunteers in student learning activities*	31	104
# volunteers in non-academic activities*	69	71

*approximate

A positive outcome has been the successful use of volunteers for academic activities. Teachers are currently requesting additional volunteers.

Unanticipated Outcomes:

1. Unplanned, but now in effect, is the formation of a Guiding Committee. This committee is currently made up of teacherrs and will be expanded next year. Their purpose is to plan for the expenditure of any remaining grant funds and begin setting the program in place for next year.

Section IV: Results Achieved

Objective 1: Increase Academic Learning Time by 20 minutes per day per classroom during the project period.

1. A staff survey and classroom observations were conducted to assess the academic efficiency. A comparison of efficiency and interruptions is shown on the charts on the following pages.

   In general, the following improvements are to be noted:

   Non-instructional class time is approximately 1/3 of what the fall measure indicated.

   Student inattentiveness is about 1/2 of what was measured in the fall.

   Therefore, it could be concluded that teacher and student practices changed significantly in order to increase student opportunity for successful learning.

Building Total

Fall '86

ACADEMIC EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MINUTES PER DAY OF SCHEDULED NON-INSTRUCTIONAL TIME IS:
117.16

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULED FOR NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES IS:
31.24%

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHEDULED SCHOOL DAY FOR CLASS TIME IS:
68.76%

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ABSENCES PER DAY IS:
19.18

THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ABSENT PER DAY IS:
3.76%

THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ATTENDING IS:
96.23%

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHOOL DAY LOST TO NON-INSTRUCTIONAL CLASS TIME IS:
7.04%

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHOOL DAY DEVOTED TO INSTRUCTION IS:
61.72%

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHOOL DAY IN WHICH STUDENTS ARE ENGAGED IS:
53.13%

THE PERCENTAGE OF CLASS TIME LOST TO INATTENTIVENESS IS:
13.91%

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHOOL DAY IN WHICH STUDENTS ARE NOT ENGAGED IS:
8.58%

THE FIVE AEI INDICES ARE:

INDEX 1: PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT ON SCHEDULED NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES:
30.07%
INDEX 2: PERCENTAGE OF TIME LOST TO ABSENTEEISM:
3.76%
INDEX 3: PERCENTAGE OF TIME LOST TO NON-INSTRUCTIONAL CLASS TIME:
6.77%
INDEX 4: PERCENTAGE OF TIME LOST TO INATTENTIVENESS IN CLASS:
8.26%
INDEX 5: PERCENTAGE OF TIME ENGAGED IN ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES--AEI:
51.13%

NOTE THAT AS A CHECK, THE FOLLOWING NUMBER SHOULD BE VERY CLOSE TO 100:100

Building Total

Fall '86

ACADEMIC EFFICIENCY GRID

Combined McREL AEI Norms

	Non-Inst. Activities	Absenteeism	Non-Inst. Class Time	Student Inattent.	AEI
High School	.185	.079	.102	.120	.514
Middle School	.177	.057	.104	.092	.577
Elem. School	.208	.039	.086	.116	.551
Your School	.200	.038	.067	.083	.510

SPRING '87

ACADEMIC EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MINUTES PER DAY OF SCHEDULED NON-INSTRUCTIONAL TIME IS:
123.3

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULED FOR NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES IS:
32.88%

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHEDULED SCHOOL DAY FOR CLASS TIME IS:
67.12%

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ABSENCES PER DAY IS:
23

THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ABSENT PER DAY IS:
4.29%

THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ATTENDING IS:
95.71%

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHOOL DAY LOST TO NON-INSTRUCTIONAL CLASS TIME IS:
2.95%

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHOOL DAY DEVOTED TO INSTRUCTION IS:
64.17%

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHOOL DAY IN WHICH STUDENTS ARE ENGAGED IS:
59.48%

THE PERCENTAGE OF CLASS TIME LOST TO INATTENTIVENESS IS:
7.3%

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHOOL DAY IN WHICH STUDENTS ARE NOT ENGAGED IS:
4.68%

THE FIVE AEI INDICES ARE:

INDEX 1: PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT ON SCHEDULED NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES:
31.47%
INDEX 2: PERCENTAGE OF TIME LOST TO ABSENTEEISM:
4.29%
INDEX 3: PERCENTAGE OF TIME LOST TO NON-INSTRUCTIONAL CLASS TIME:
2.83%
INDEX 4: PERCENTAGE OF TIME LOST TO INATTENTIVENESS IN CLASS:
4.48%
INDEX 5: PERCENTAGE OF TIME ENGAGED IN ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES--AEI:
56.43%

NOTE THAT AS A CHECK, THE FOLLOWING NUMBER SHOULD BE VERY CLOSE TO 100:1.00

SPRING '87

ACADEMIC EFFICIENCY GRID

Combined McREL EI Norms

	Non-Inst. Activities	Absenteeism	Non-Inst. Class Time	Student Inattent.	AEI
High School	.185	.072	.102	.120	.314
Middle School	.177	.027	.104	.092	.377
Elem. School	.208	.[illegible]	.086	.116	.351
Your Scores	.314	.043	.025	.044	.568

2. One staff member completed (on her own initiative) the spring session of Academic Efficiency training and implemented student self-check techniques for on-task behavior. She reported, and this writer observed, a 95% on-task rate during reading group time.

Objective 2: The mean gain of students, grades 2-6, at Gregory Heights School in mathematics and reading will be 6 months growth during a 5 month instructional period (a rate of 1.2 months growth for each month in the program).

As can be seen, in all but 5th grade math, the students did exceed the goal of 1.2 months growth per month. There is no clear explanation for this. However, the principal reports a fairly transient student population in that grade as well as a considerable number of special education students.

Objective 2 - "The mean gain of students, grades 2 - 6, at Gregory Heights School in mathematics and reading will be 6 months growth during a 5 month instructional period (a rate of 1.2 months growth for each month in the program)."

Gains were determined by comparing pre- and posttest scores on the California Achievement Tests, Form E. Pretests were administered during the week of September 29 - October 3, 1986. Posttests were given in the week of May 4 - 8, 1987.

Time between testing events was 8 months. Each month gain in this case is equivalent to 1.2 months when compared with testing conducted on a ten month interval. Grade Mean Equivalent scores, pre- and post and their differences are presented below by grade level.

GRADE MEAN EQUIVALENT SCORES

	Reading			Mathematics		
Grade	Pre-	Post	Difference	Pre-	Post	Difference
2	1.4	3.1	1.7 (2.04)	1.9	3.2	1.3 (1.56)
3	3.0	5.1	2.1 (2.52)	2.0	5.1	2.2 (2.64)
4	4.0	6.0	2.0 (2.40)	4.0	5.5	1.5 (1.80)
5	5.4	6.9	1.5 (1.80)	4.9	5.7	0.8 (0.96)
6	6.8	8.0	2.2 (2.64)	5.7	8.0	2.3 (2.76)

( ) - adjusted value, gain x 1.2.

Objective 3: The total volunteer time devoted to directing/assisting in student academic learning activities (as opposed to clerical, routine activities) at Gregory Heights School will increase at least 30% over that of the previous year.

1. Volunteers were recruited by special letter, newsletter, as well as personal invitations. A Volunteer Coordinator for PTA contacted individuals and helped make arrangements. The staff utilizing volunteers reported many plusses as well as a few wishes to consider for the next school year. (See Staff Evaluation of Grant Activities).

In addition to those activities reported above, included is additional information on several topics.

1. Results of peer coaching and visits. Teachers improved Time on Task by learning management tricks for roll, passing papers and transitions. Also shared were questioning techniques designed to maximize student involvement.

   The teacher visits were to look specifically at successful reading programs and total group instruction. The goal was to use fewer dittoes and workbooks and more experiential learning for students.

2. On May 20, 1987, the Gregory Heights staff conducted an evaluation process of all grant activities. This served as a synthesis of the year of activities supported by the grant as well as information to consider in setting goals for next year. Upon approval of the grant extension, the staff will focus on self-esteem as a paired component with academic achievement. Staff planned to write curriculum during the summer, attend a Practitioner's Workshop in the fall and contract with a special presenter, Marcia Slater, to focus on self-esteem.

Staff Evaluation of Grant Activities

LINDA SIMINGTON WORKSHOP

	++Pluses++	Wishes
Students	higher achievement more consistent curriculum heightened self-esteem modeling of commitment by T's	more student ownership
Staff	greater awareness of other programs seeing a need for more planning, consistency and integration	I wish I knew as much I wish I knew a way to make it happen easier than it seems Focus on one simple thing, not so much
Volunteers	There will be greater involvement Will be impressed +PR	Need more volunteers

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

	Pluses	Wishes
Students	Less tension over tests Hopefully higher scores Increased self-esteem Improved test taking skills Good training for life skills	More commitment and ownership More challenge for high achievers - volunteers More resources for low achievers Higher expectations at home Higher value level for education
Staff	*BER workshops were productive and practical Increased self-esteem - feeling more powerful Grade level test skill planning period	More follow-up District and state level support District support ($) for seminar attendance Plan in building budget for T. seminar attendance *More BER workshops - not as many district workshop 3 for 1 - 3 crumby workshops for one excellent, expensive workshop
Community	Increased participation Feel better about school	Honor education Send kids ready to learn Keep up good work

TIME ON TASK

	Pluses	Wishes
Students	Higher productivity - learn math facts, finish assignments Less discipline problems Sense of satisfaction they have achieved - success breeds success Continuity from resource and regular	More self-esteem - students Learn listening skills, study, organization Independent workers
Staff	Prompt staff - when teacher there at take up time - more time on task Sense of accomplishment when we have good closure Awareness of time and its use - cooperation of staff in time on task We have increased communication Streamlined schedules between resource and regular	More communication Increased organization Teacher computer Follow-up of T.O.T. decisions More time for teacher planning
Community	Lil's were very consistent, reliable Tax dollars used properly Appreciation of teachers	Greater number reliable volunteers

VOLUNTEERISM

	Pluses	Wishes
Students	More individual attention Immediate feedback Students can progress faster with skill development (not so much standing) More aware of individual help from volunteers Provides a fresh approach, new voice (someone else to nag)	More MORE MORE!!! Helper to run materials
Staff	More HELP!! Morale booster	More VOLUNTEERS #1 - COMMITTED #2 - WELL TRAINED #3 - Match SKILLS with NEEDS Volunteers use copier during off times when not needed immediately Time to train
Community	Positive and Quality involvement Volunteer learns continuity of classroom schedule and children needs Volunteers become more supportive of teacher	Reach outside "parent" volunteers Van to bring elderly people to school Take correcting to elderly Send a flyer out to reach out to "parents", other community people - do it more than at beginning of year Pro attitude

Section V: No Cost Extension Activities

This section of the report will summarize the results of efforts related to the time extension granted which focused solely on student self-esteem and discipline.

In the spring of 1987 the Gregory Heights staff applied for and received supplemental funds to send an expanded team to the Practitioners Workshp at Fort Worden State Park. The focus on self-esteem and discipline was an excellent catalyst in determining the direction of grant activities.

The following activities have occurred:

- Teacher team met during the summer to review available literature and materials relating to discipline and self-esteem.
- Principal involved staff in observing students outside the classroom environment and recording these observations.
- Teachers wrote expectations for student behavior, staff behavior, and principal behavior in various school locations and situations, i.e., lunchroom, playground, halls, etc.
- Draft of expectations continues to be edited by staff. Final form yet to come.
- Team attended practitioner's workshop.
- School-wide program is being developed to support behavior expectations.
- Teacher leadership team has been formed and is functioning.
- Randy Sprick, consultant, spent two days at Gregory Heights interacting with students and staff.
- Staff reviewed and piloted Positive Action Program.

Staff development was an integral part of grant implementation. A broad approach to staff development activities was organized in the following manner:

- Expertise of building staff utilized.
- Expertise of district staff utilized.
- Staff members attended workshops outside the building and reported to staff.
- An expert was brought into the building to serve as a consultant.

This approach was most effective in providing a variety of effective staff development opportunities for the Gregory Heights staff utilizing grant monies.